

Message Text

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73

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 H-03 SS-15 NSC-10 PA-03

PRS-01 USIA-15 RSR-01 /150 W
----- 130186

R 191703Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2749

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS LONDON 08333

DEPT PASS COMMERCE (OIBA)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, UK, FR

SUBJECT: CHANNEL TUNNEL DECISION DELAYED

REF: LONDON A-892 OF JULY 6, 1973

1. BRITISH PRESS HAS REPORTED AND UK OFFICIALS HAVE CONFIRMED TO EMBASSY THAT FURTHER DISCUSSIONS INVOLVING BRITISH AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS AND CHANNEL TUNNEL COMPANIES IN BOTH UK AND FRANCE WILL BE HELD BEFORE CABINET WILL MAKE DECISION RE PROCEEDING WITH 25 MILLION POUND PHASE TWO OF CHANNEL TUNNEL PROJECT. TALKS EVIDENTLY WILL FOCUS PRIMARILY ON FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 846 MILLION POUND PROJECT, PARTICULARLY ON HOW PROFITS WILL BE SHARED BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND PRIVATE TUNNEL COMPANIES.

2. DECISION TO CONDUCT FURTHER TALKS WILL PROBABLY MEAN THAT UK WILL NOT BE IN POSITION TO SIGN ANGLO-FRENCH
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TREATY AND AGREEMENT WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH CHANNEL

TUNNEL COMPANIES BY JULY 31, THE ORIGINAL TARGET DATE FOR COMMITMENT TO PHASE TWO OF THE GRANT PROJECT. SIGNING OF THESE AGREEMENTS WOULD REQUIRE PASSAGE OF A MONEY BILL THROUGH PARLIAMENT (REFAIR). AT THIS STAGE, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH GOVERNMENT MAY NOT EVEN BE ABLE TO INTRODUCE MONEY BILL BEFORE PARLIAMENT ADJOURNS FOR THREE-MONTH SUMMER RECESS. PROJECT SUPPORTERS, HOWEVER, ARE STILL HOPEFUL THAT GOVERNMENT WILL DECIDE IN FAVOR OF TUNNEL BY END OF JULY IN WHICH CASE MONEY BILL COULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN PARLIAMENT RECONVENES IN FALL AND AGREEMENTS COULD BE SIGNED BY MID-NOVEMBER. THIS DELAY, WHICH NOW APPEARS INEVITABLE, IS EXPECTED TO ADD SEVERAL MILLION POUNDS TO THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT. ANNENBERG

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30 JUN 2005

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